

Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances: terms of reference

Our terms of reference set out the role of the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS).

What is the ACBS?

The ACBS is an advisory non-departmental public body. It is a scientific advisory committee that is independent of the Department of Health and Social Care, notwithstanding being established and sponsored by it.

Terms of reference

The ACBS is responsible for advising the Secretary of State on the prescribing and use of borderline substances in NHS primary care and the community. Borderline substances are:

1. nutritional products specially formulated to support the management of diseases, disorders or medical conditions that are impossible or difficult to manage using normal foods alone
2. dermatological products

The ACBS:

- advises on prescribing and use of borderline substances in NHS primary care and the community including but not restricted to the specific products prescribed, when it may be appropriate to prescribe those products, the way they are prescribed, how much of those products is and should be prescribed and for how long, as well how products are used and administered by clinicians, carers and patients
- advises on ways to improve safety and care for patients for whom borderline substances are prescribed, including at the point of discharge from secondary care into the community
- advises on the value for money of borderline substance prescribing nationally by considering whole population needs

- considers and acts on existing clinical guidance and research, and advises on matters where this is lacking and where commissioning guidance or research would be beneficial
- reviews applications for borderline substances by assessing safety, efficacy, clinical need, use and value for money and approves them for listing in Part XV of the Drug Tariff (which lists the products pharmacy contractors will be reimbursed for under NHS prescription services)
- monitors the application process for borderline substances, and develops its administration to ensure it enables applicants to appeal against the process and for any issues to be considered and used to improve the process